

Just the Facts: House Republicans' Failed Record on the Environment

In May, the White House released its third U.S. National Climate Assessment revealing the dangerous effects climate change is already having – and will continue to have – on regions across the nation. One month later, the Republican-led House voted for the [500th time](#) to undermine environmental protections. Here's a look at how House Republicans continue to ignore the majority of Americans, scientific experts, and the wide range of negative side-effects associated with climate change:

HOUSE REPUBLICANS WASTE TIME ON LEGISLATION THAT HARMS THE ENVIRONMENT, THREATENS PUBLIC HEALTH

House Republicans continue to put forth faux “jobs” and “energy” bills that don't create jobs, harm the environment, threaten public health, and have no chance of becoming law. For example:

- **H.R. 2** – A bill that would severely limit the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants under the Clean Air Act. [9/18/14]
- **H.R. 4899** – A bill that gives away public lands to Big Oil companies, which threatens conservation efforts, tourism, fishing, our coastal environment, and jobs. [6/26/14]
- **H.R. 3826** – A bill that puts our health, economy, and environment at risk by blocking federal efforts to reduce carbon pollution, and does nothing to address job creation. [3/6/14]
- **H.R. 2641** – This legislation blurs the distinct roles of private entities and agencies in agency decisions by allowing project sponsors to prepare environmental review documents. [3/6/14]
- **H.R. 2804** – A package of four Republican bills that impose new, burdensome reporting requirements for federal agencies and undermine the ability to regulate for safety and the environment. [2/27/14]
- **H.R. 2728** – This legislation blocks federal supervision of hydraulic fracking for oil or gas on federal lands and gives control over oil and gas production on such lands to the states, even if it results in weak management. [12/9/13]
- **H.R. 1526** – Legislation to undermine, or in some cases eliminate, multiple-use of our national forests, favoring timber harvest over hunting, fishing, and other forms of outdoor recreation. [9/20/13]
- **H.R. 761** – This bill benefits the mining industry and significantly reduces or removes proper environmental reviews, undermining environmental protections and doing nothing to address job creation. [9/18/13]

In February, The League of Conservation Voters released their National Environment Scorecard, which showed that House Republicans under President Obama have the worst environmental record since the organization began putting out their scorecards in 1970. [National Journal, [2/11/14](#)] Not only do their fake jobs bills harm the environment, but House Republicans have also voted to flat-out deny even the existence of climate change:

- 227 Republicans voted to pass an amendment that would “bar the Department of Defense from using funds to assess climate change and its implications for national security.” [Huffington Post, [5/23/14](#)]
- 24 Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce Committee voted down an amendment that would have “stated conclusively that climate change was occurring.” [Think Progress, [1/28/14](#)]

...BUT THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS BELIEVE WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

Sixty-nine percent agree that “global warming, also known as climate change, is a serious problem facing this country.” Fifty-seven percent called it a “very serious problem.” [Washington Post/ABC News Poll, [6/8/14](#)]

Seventy percent of registered voters agree that “the federal government should limit the release of greenhouse gases from existing power plants in an effort to reduce global warming.” In the same poll, 69% of independents agreed, along with 63% of registered Republicans. [Washington Post/ABC News Poll, [6/8/14](#)]

AND HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESS COMMUNITY LEADERS, AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS AGREE WE MUST ACT

Business Leaders: “A coalition of 176 companies, including Unilever, Mars Inc. and clothing maker VF Corp., sent letters Monday to the Obama administration and congressional leaders to support the administration’s proposal to limit power plant carbon dioxide emissions.” [The Hill, [06/02/14](#)]

The American Lung Association: “Power plant pollution makes people sick and cuts short lives. We are pleased to see significant health benefits from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed limits on carbon pollution from power plants, which would reduce the burden of air pollution in America.” [Press Release, [06/02/14](#)]

U.S. Conference of Bishops: “We are pastors in a faith tradition that teaches, as Pope Francis recently stated, ‘Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.’ The best evidence indicates that power plants are the largest stationary source of carbon emissions in the United States, and a major contributor to climate change.” [Letter, [05/29/14](#)]

HOUSE REPUBLICANS IGNORE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

Although scientific experts agree that global warming is occurring...

“A new study confirms there is strong scientific consensus that human activities are causing the planet to warm. 97 percent of scientific papers (that take a stance on the issue) agree.” [Washington Post, [5/17/13](#)]

...Many House Republicans refuse to accept this truth:

“In a Pew Research Center survey from January 2014, 46 percent of Republicans and those leaning Republican said there was no evidence that the earth is warming. Seventy percent of tea party Republicans think the same.” [Washington Post, [6/2/14](#)]

Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL): “I have scientists that I rely on, the scientists that I rely on say our climate has changed. It wasn’t just a few years ago, what was the problem that existed? It wasn’t global warming, we were gonna all be an ice cube. We’re not ice cubes. Our climate will continue to change because of the way God formed the earth.” [Buzzfeed, [8/14/13](#)]

Rep. Todd Rokita (R-IN): “I think it’s arrogant that we think as people that we can somehow change the climate of the whole earth when science is telling us that there’s a cycle to all this. And that cycle was occurring before the industrial revolution and I suspect will occur way into the future.” [Think Progress, [8/27/13](#)]

Rep. Steve King (R-IA): “It is not proven, it’s not science... It’s more of a religion than a science... Everything that might result from a warmer planet is always bad in [environmentalists’] analysis. There will be more photosynthesis going on if the Earth gets warmer... And if sea levels go up 4 or 6 inches, I don’t know if we’d know that.” [Huffington Post, [8/7/13](#)]

Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-SC): “We believe that the authority to limit carbon emissions, even if that were actually a necessity, rests in neither the Constitution nor the Clean Air Act but in the true free market of individual choices made by the American people... We believe this carbon dioxide regulation — whose implementation is legally questionable at best — would do untold harm to the American people and our economy for decades to come.” [The Hill, [6/19/14](#)]

Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX): “I would point out if you’re a believer in the Bible, one would have to say the Great Flood is an example of climate change. And that certainly wasn’t because mankind overdeveloped hydrocarbon energy.” [Salon, [4/10/13](#)]

CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL AND IMPACTS US ALL

Despite House Republicans' reluctance to accept scientific evidence about the existence of climate change, the impacts remain a real threat. From droughts and heat waves to seasonal allergies, the effects of climate change are wide-reaching, as shown in the most recent [data](#) from 2012:

Economy

- Climate and weather disasters in 2012 cost the American economy more than \$100 billion.
- The effects of climate change on agriculture will have consequences for food security through changes in crop yields and food prices and effects on food processing, storage, and retailing.
- Sea level rise increases the risk of major coastal impacts on transportation infrastructure, including flooding of ports and harbors, roads, rail lines, tunnels, and bridges.

Health

- Climate change amplifies existing health threats through extreme weather events, wildfire, decrease in air quality, threats to mental health, and illnesses transmitted by food, water, and disease carriers, such as mosquitoes and ticks.
- Children's lung development and older Americans' diminished ability to regulate body temperature make these groups two of the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, in addition to the poor, sick, and some communities of color.

Weather

- 2012 was the warmest year on record for the U.S., accompanied by an increase in storms, droughts, and heat waves.
- Temperatures are projected to rise another 2°F to 4°F in most areas of the United States over the next few decades and up to 10°F by the end of the century if serious reductions in our emissions are not made.
- In 2012, precipitation was 2.57 inches below the 20th century average and wildfires burned more than 9.3 million acres in the U.S.

And according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it's getting worse. The newest [report](#) by the United Nations group concluded that:

- Ice caps are melting
- Sea ice in the Arctic is collapsing
- Water supplies are coming under stress
- Heat waves and heavy rains are escalating
- Coral reefs are dying
- Fish and many other creatures are migrating toward the poles or in some cases going extinct
- The world's food supply is at risk

“Throughout the 21st century, climate-change impacts are projected to slow down economic growth, make poverty reduction more difficult, further erode food security, and prolong existing and create new poverty traps, the latter particularly in urban areas and emerging hot spots of hunger,” the report declared.” [New York Times, [3/31/14](#)]

HOUSE DEMOCRATS ARE COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

While House Republicans continue to disguise their anti-environment legislation as “jobs” and “energy” bills, House Democrats are giving climate change the attention it deserves. Democrats are committed to investing in clean and renewable energy, reducing greenhouse emissions, curbing carbon pollution, and passing legislation that will protect our environment, our health, and our economy.